

America: A Bastion For Liberty

Warren Phillip Mason

Following the end of the Civil War our nation began the process of healing. In what is now forever canonized in American classic literature, the historian Douglas Freeman captured this all important but too easily overlooked moment. A young mother approached General Robert E. Lee seeking his blessing upon her infant son. He said to her, "Teach him that he must deny himself."

A nation humbled by war took this to heart and set to work trading rifles for plows and bayonets for bushels of wheat. A new and wonderful era of American prosperity emerged. This phrase to "Teach him that he must deny himself" is perhaps without question best understood by our veterans throughout the American generations who have given of themselves on behalf of their families, and fellow citizens.

The now iconic struggle and fiery crucible of WWII that refined and defined a whole American generation produced a byproduct era in American history of untold freedom and prosperity never before experienced by a nation on earth. Tom Brokaw calls the men and women who fought for America The Greatest Generation. Their valiant efforts put an end to the world wars, united nations in peace, brought security to domestic life and its accompanying economic pursuits.

One of their number, and one of our greatest battlefield commanders, General George S. Patton in his sometimes harsh and unforgiving way described what was and is required of our soldiers and veterans. He said, "I don't measure a man by how high he climbs but how high he bounces when he hits the bottom," and on another occasion "A pint of sweat will save a gallon of blood."

Across the Atlantic ocean one of our best allies, Winston Churchill described the hope of victory that runs in the veins of free men and women everywhere who work to preserve liberty and governments that enable mankind's right to choose for themselves.

Although spoken of in his own country it applies equally to ours as well. Note carefully what he says, "If it is a case of the whole nation fighting and suffering together, that ought to suit us, because we are the most united of all the nations, because we entered the war upon the national will and with our eyes open, and because we have been nurtured in freedom and individual responsibility and are the products, not of totalitarian uniformity but of tolerance and variety. If all these qualities are turned as they are being turned, to the arts of war, we may be able to show the enemy quite a lot of things that they have not thought of yet."

His words proved prophetic in a host of ways and even on multiple continents. This legacy continues on and here in America we continue to "show the enemy quite a lot of things they have not thought of yet."

President Harry S. Truman made this fitting tribute to our forefathers and foremothers: "Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices."

Today we remember their sacrifices and the sacrifices of the veterans who are with us today. To use Sir Isaac Newton's words we see further because we stand on the shoulders of giants. In America among our giants have been our veterans, what we have accomplished, what we are, what we do, and what we hope to become is thanks to them and their sacrifices.

May I share one final thought with you. Warfare in the late 20th century and early 21st century has evolved. Evil has been rampant, rearing its ugly head and most are aware of its presence, yet the lines of the battlefield are blurred and confusion over who the enemy is is quite common. Good is called evil and evil is called good. In the past our forefathers and foremothers clearly knew who the enemy was. Today, we are sometimes not so sure. The only way to ensure that our soldiers and veterans have not fought in vain is for us to raise up a generation equal to or better than the "Greatest Generation."

There is only one way to do this. John Adams said and I quote, "Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."^[1] Morality and virtue are the foundation of our republic and necessary for a society to be free."

Here is the great key: we must educate ourselves and be students of freedom and virtue. We must vigorously pursue the good, the true and the beautiful in our classical education. If we do this I believe it is possible to raise up another generation who can put an end to conflict, pursue peace, and make America a bastion for liberty. God Bless. Thank you.

Note:

America: A Bastion for Liberty was a speech delivered by Warren Phillip Mason at Founders Classical Academy of Rogers on Veterans Day November 11th 2023. The occasion was the Veterans Day Assembly where the community was invited to come and honor their veterans. There were a couple hundred veterans from all branches of the military present. Arkansas Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders was the keynote speaker at the assembly accompanied by other dignitaries from local and state government. It was estimated that there were about 600 hundred people from the community at the assembly.



Left to Right: Headmaster Heather Arabie, Assist. Headmaster Lacy Little, Governor Sarah Sanders, and Student Dean Phillip Mason.



Governor Sanders (at the head of the Gymnasium dressed in green in front of the American Flags) addressing the community and students at Founders Classical Academy of Rogers, Nov. 11th 2023.